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ABSTRACT

School psychologists constitute a major available resource to administrators and school boards as they develop comprehensive plans to increase educational effectiveness and student achievement. This publication shows how school administrators and board members can obtain the greatest return on their investment in school psychological services. While the quality of school leadership in today's schools is better than ever, school boards and administrators have clearly delineated the enormous problems that they face in educating our nation's children. With the passage of the national education goals, educators are seeking new and effective means to address the problems that face America's schools. This guide is intended to be an education tool about school psychology for school administrators, the general public, and others who might use the services of school psychologists. It describes features that are often involved in hiring school psychologists, in using their services, and in making changes based on their recommendations. Chapters are: (1) Your School Psychologist; (2) Planning and Developing a School Psychological Services Program; (3) Enhancement of School and District Goals Through Use of School Psychological Services; and (4) Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in the Delivery of Psychological Services in Schools. Appendices contain a sample interview form, an additional reading list with 78 references, and Psychology in the Schools Program Mission Statement. (JBJ)

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DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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An Educator's Guide

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Task Force on Psychology in the Schools
Psychology in the Schools Program
Board of Professional Affairs
American Psychological Association

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DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

An Educator's Guide

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Preamble

An Educator's Guide is intended to be an educational tool about school psychology for school administrators, the general public, and others who might use the services of school psychologists. The *Guide*, however, has not been approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives and does not represent a statement of APA policy.

The *Guide* describes many features that often are involved in hiring school psychologists, in using their services, and in making changes based on their recommendations. The *Guide* is designed solely to provide suggestions. Particular local situations may warrant procedures or results other than those described here.

Introduction

Psychologists who serve our nation's schools constitute a major available resource to administrators and to school boards as they develop comprehensive plans to increase educational effectiveness and student achievement. The psychologist's specific skills may be helpful in developing and implementing school plans. This publication shows how school administrators and board members can obtain the greatest return on their investment in school psychological services.

Those of us who have participated in the preparation of this document believe that quality of leadership in today's schools is better than it has been at any time. In our experience, school boards and administrators have clearly delineated the enormous problems that they face in educating our nation's children. With the passage of the national education goals, educators are seeking new and effective means to address the crushing problems that face America's schools. We hope that this publication will clarify the role that psychology can play in the campaign to cope with the problems that threaten the processes of teaching and of learning.

1

Your School Psychologist

School psychologists, *your* school psychologists, are committed to promoting human welfare by the application of psychological knowledge to the enhancement of teaching and learning. School psychologists base their educational and psychological practices on sound theoretical and scientific foundations. The school psychologist's goal is to enhance the growth and the development of all learners from the preschool years through adulthood.

How Psychologists Work

Psychologists provide services that enhance the goals of the school or of the school district to promote a positive climate for learning and mental health, to assist teachers in planning school programs, and to facilitate the development of individual children and youth.

With Whom Do Psychologists Do Their Work?

School psychologists divide their time among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the community. During a typical week, a psychologist may

- consult with administrators about school-wide or system-wide problems and programs;
- consult with teachers about issues affecting one or more students or provide a staff development program;
- offer individual or group counseling, evaluate one or more students, provide behavioral intervention to others, meet with parents, and develop or conduct a program for prevention or for other intervention purposes;
- collect data for a school district research project; and
- participate in district and community committees to plan programs that promote academic, personal, and social development.

Services to Support School-Wide or District-Wide Programs

School psychologists provide a useful perspective in the design of school or of school district programs intended to meet the needs of a widely diverse student population. They also provide assistance to teachers and parents, as well as collaboration with community agencies, to enhance the educational develop-

ment of all students. Some examples of the contributions that school psychologists can be expected to make are explained in the following sections.

Assessment of educational outcomes. Psychologists can select or design measurement techniques to assess group or individual educational outcomes. They also can analyze and interpret the results of standardized achievement tests, performance-based assessments, and student portfolios and help teachers use those results.

Program planning and evaluation. Psychologists can participate in planning instructional programs that the school intends to introduce, ensuring that these programs take into account the psychological and developmental characteristics of the school population. Since accountability is a major issue in program development, psychologists can design the formal evaluation of innovative programs, facilitate systematic evaluation of outcomes, and support effective administrative decision making following the program evaluation.

Teacher and staff development. Psychologists offer staff development for teachers and other school staff members for the purpose of improved classroom management, better instructional approaches, and increased understanding of the needs of all pupils.

Parent education. Psychologists provide parent education in areas such as parent–child communication, effective discipline, sex education, study techniques, and enrichment activities. Such activities result in more positive parental attitudes toward the school and in improved student performance.

Employee assistance programs. Psychologists have been successful in providing a variety of health promotion programs in the schools to improve morale, reduce absenteeism, and encourage more effective staff performance.

Community action programs. Psychologists can facilitate cooperative efforts between the school (or school district) and the community to promote joint programs, such as those designed to prevent substance abuse, violence, delinquency, and antisocial behavior.

Teaching of psychology. Psychologists can teach psychology or consult with others who teach it. Many school systems have introduced courses in psychology at the junior or senior high school level, with which school psychologists should be actively involved.

Multicultural perspective in schooling. Psychologists are trained to be sensitive to the differences in behaviors and attitudes toward school of culturally diverse groups. They can contribute to the development of programs that promote the academic development of a culturally diverse population.

Sports programs. Psychologists can contribute to the design of sports programs that aim to improve the motivation and level of performance of individual players and of entire teams. A school with a successful team feels a positive impact on morale and general supportiveness. Psychologists have worked to develop improved team performance, even in the absence of superstars.

Services to Individual Students, Groups, and Their Families

The following list of services reflects the range of school psychological services offered to individual students, groups of students, and their families. However, one must keep in mind that school psychologists vary in the range of competencies that they possess. At times, one may need the services of a special psychological consultant. In general, however, school psychologists are able to provide most of the following services.

Psychological assessment. Psychologists can assess the cognitive abilities, academic performance, emotional functioning, sensory-motor functioning, and interpersonal competence of individual students. Based on the information derived from these assessments, usually with batteries of personality, intellectual, sensory-motor, educational, and social abilities tests, they propose appropriate educational programs for general education pupils and for pupils with special needs.

Early identification of students' potential difficulties. Psychologists can design programs to help identify students with special needs and to address those needs before the youngsters experience costly failures. Such programs may be offered pre-kindergarten, at entrance to kindergarten programs or first grade, or at other critical entry or transition points in the student's educational program. Federal laws mandate the identification, at the earliest opportunity, of a handicapped child who may be in need of special educational programming.

Counseling and therapy. Psychologists can provide counseling or therapy on an individual, group, or family basis to help pupils function more effectively and to overcome the impact of emotional or behavioral difficulties that interfere with school performance.

Crisis intervention. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, and floods; the death of a classmate or of a teacher; or personal family tragedies often require the immediate intervention of a school psychologist to support students and staff during the crisis period.

Parent conferences. Psychologists provide consultation with parents and, in turn, acquire greater knowledge of the child's developmental history, learn about cultural and economic factors that may interfere with learning, and collaborate with parents to plan the school program. Psychologists engage the teachers in such parent conferences whenever confidentiality allows.

Teacher consultation. Psychologists offer consultation with teachers to mobilize classroom resources to assist an individual pupil or a group of pupils with their school program.

Referrals to community agencies. Psychologists are knowledgeable about the network of human services available in the communities. They serve as referral resources for individual children who require additional services to support their educational program.

Other services provided by school psychologists. School psychologists, through their own continuing education, add new skills to their list of credentials. As a result, they continually expand the range and type of services that they can offer to a school district. The *Educator's Guide* lists many of the functions commonly performed by school psychologists.

* * *

The *Educator's Guide* identifies a broad range of roles that school psychologists may usefully perform. However, because of legal and professional ethical constraints, it may not be possible for a psychologist to perform simultaneously certain of these roles. Issues such as these are resolved in accordance with legal and ethical principles, which are discussed in chapter 4.

2

Planning and Developing a School Psychological Services Program

As a school administrator, you are responsible for overseeing the management of the district's educational program as well as the array of pupil services needed to promote children's academic, personal, and social development. The school psychological services delivery system is a critical service area that you will need to review. *Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by School Psychologists*, approved by the American Psychological Association (APA, 1981), specify that there must be a sufficient number of school psychologists to provide services to the children in the district. But what are the criteria used to know whether the number of school psychologists is sufficient?

Recommendations as to the preferred ratio of school psychologists to elementary and secondary school children vary according to the psychological needs of the students and teachers in a school district, the types of special programs provided for them, the availability of related community resources, the distance between schools, and other factors that may be unique to a particular school district. The ratio of school psychologists to children and youths generally ranges from one school psychologist for each 1,000 children in the school district to one school psychologist for every 2,000 children. Thus, for small school districts of about 1,000 children, one psychologist may be sufficient; but for large districts, a school administrator would want to ensure an adequate staffing pattern, and more than one school psychologist would be needed.

A first step in reviewing the staffing complement of your school psychological services program would be to discuss the matter with your school psychologist, or if there is more than one school psychologist, with the one who functions as the head, leader, supervisor, coordinator, or director of the services unit. If there is no designated lead person, you will want to establish criteria for selecting and appointing one who is qualified to serve in that capacity. Suggestions are offered on page 7.

Taking Into Account the Psychological Needs of the School Population in Designing and Staffing a School Psychological Services Program

In your discussions with the school psychologist responsible for the district's school psychology program, you will want to review the characteristics of the school population with regard to the psychological services that are being

anticipated for a given school year. For example, children with handicapping conditions will require psychologists to evaluate their psychological needs and to collaborate with teachers in planning appropriate educational programs. Children from foreign language homes or from diverse cultural backgrounds may require special attention to their individual characteristics. Children with specific health problems, those from single-parent families, or those from families in which both parents are working may present risk factors and may require psychological services to promote educational success.

Another step in considering the complement of school psychological staff needed for a school district would be to review data on the prevalence of school dropouts; children from families at and below the poverty level; children from cultural backgrounds different from the norm of the district as a whole; the rates of delinquency, substance abuse, violent episodes, and teenage pregnancy; the number of handicapped children in the district; and the prevalence of other special problems among the school district population. From these data, you and the lead school psychologist would be better able to discuss the range of psychological services that need to be provided to help ensure that the psychological needs of the district's children are accounted for in promoting academic, personal, and social development in the school. As an example, a school psychologist might gather information on similarities and differences between immigrant southeast Asian and other children's social development and consult with administrators and teachers regarding ways in which the schools could accommodate these children's needs while promoting their development. Districts with high rates of teenage pregnancy might profit from school psychologists' expertise in primary prevention programs as well as from more traditional tertiary preventive efforts to educate teenage mothers. School psychologists can aid districts with excessively high numbers of students with learning disabilities to investigate ways in which the core curriculum could be modified to address their needs better.

The particular student needs of each school district determine the scope of such interventions. In turn, student needs will suggest the qualifications that you will find desirable in your school psychologists.

The identified needs of children usually exceed the availability of budgetary resources. Where there are insufficient monies to support all of the needed psychological services, the lead school psychologist will need to assign priorities to the required services. In doing this, the goal is to address the most pressing district priorities while maintaining a comprehensive service delivery plan that meets as many service needs as possible.

Following the collation of needs assessment and of prevalence data, the lead psychologist establishes a year-long plan for psychological services. Priorities can be assigned to the goals for psychological services on the basis of the lead psychologist's recommendations and confirmed by representatives of the teaching staff, school site administrator, and parent organizations.

Once the needs of the school population have been determined and a plan for psychological services developed for the school year, the next step is to determine the complement of school psychological personnel required to implement the service delivery plan. A school psychological services program is

structured so as to facilitate effective and economical delivery of services. For example, a school psychological services program serving predominantly low-income or ethnic or racial minority children has a staffing pattern and service programs that are adapted to the linguistic, experiential, and attitudinal characteristics of the children and families who will be served. The appropriateness of assessment procedures is always an important question. Appropriate types of assessment material with relevant norm-referenced groups are necessary in the conduct of psychological evaluations for these children.

At times, large numbers of dropouts or other concerns are discovered when obtaining prevalence estimates of student problems. In these instances, psychologists may need to conduct a review of sample cases to determine when intervention might be most effective and the types of direct and indirect services that would be required.

Establishing an Administrative Structure, Lines of Responsibility, and Accountability for the School Psychological Services Unit

After you and the lead school psychologist have reviewed information on the services that will be required during the school year and on the number of psychological service personnel that will be needed, and have budgeted for these needs, the next step is for the lead psychologist to describe the organization of the psychological services unit in writing. The description should include lines of responsibility, supervisory relationships, and the level and extent of accountability for each person who provides psychological services.

As noted earlier, in a district large enough to have more than one school psychologist, the organizational scheme should identify one of them as the supervisor, coordinator, director, or head, lead, or chief school psychologist. Although guidelines for selecting supervising school psychologists may vary, it would be desirable for the supervising psychologist to meet the standards for credentialing as a school psychologist required in your state as well as standards that are consistent with the national guidelines for education, training, and credentialing; to have completed at least three years of successful supervised experience as a school psychologist; and to have been designated as the school psychological services supervisor, coordinator, head, lead, chief, or director in your district.

When the organizational scheme has been developed and the yearly service goals established, the methods to be used for accountability and for evaluation of all services to be provided should be discussed. Assuming that the plan in place has a sufficient number of professional and support personnel, your supervising school psychologist may wish to assign specific types of services or special problems to particular staff members. Whatever the plan for differentiating services by psychological staff member, you will need to assure yourself that school psychological services are provided in a coordinated and organized fashion, deployed in a manner ensuring that services are available to

all members of the school population, and organized in a manner ensuring that they may be evaluated effectively.

The goals of the services are to be made available in written form to members of the school district staff, to parents, and to members of the community at large. This documentation will include the methods for accessing psychological services and for making referrals, the types of services offered in a continuum of services designed to meet the psychological and academic needs of the school population, and the accountability mechanisms for the service delivery system.

Ensuring Effective Communication and Working Relationships Between the District School Psychological Services Program and the Network of Community Services

Your district school psychologists should seek to coordinate the services offered by mental health service providers from other publicly supported agencies, such as community mental health centers and child guidance clinics, as well as those from privately funded services and private practitioners so as to identify services and service providers and to promote a plan for using available services. This requires all school psychologists to be knowledgeable about the availability of community resources. Since they act on behalf of the students in the school district in coordinating information about the diagnostic and treatment services provided, the psychologists serve as liaisons and provide consulting services to the community and to agencies in psychological, mental health, and educational matters pertaining to the children in the school system while promoting a system of school-based integrated services.

In fulfilling their obligation to perform liaison and consultation functions with community agencies and personnel regarding a student, school psychologists may participate in community agency staffing of cases. Community agency personnel, in turn, may be invited to the school district to discuss particular cases with teachers and school administrators.

Toward the end of this planning process you will have (a) completed the annual review of services required to meet the psychological needs of the school population and approved the service delivery plan, (b) ensured that a full range of psychological services is available to all children, (c) provided budgetary support for a sufficient number of staff and services, and (d) been assured that arrangements have been made for ongoing liaison with community agencies and with other health, mental health, and social services personnel. The final step in your administrative oversight of the school psychological services program will be to request that the supervising school psychologist provide you with the goals and procedures by which the program will be evaluated at the end of the school year.

Monitoring the Evaluation and Accountability System for School Psychological Services

Your school psychologists will provide a wide range of services to students, teachers, administrators, and other district personnel, as well as to parents. Services can be delivered directly to the children in the form of one-on-one or of group interactions or indirectly through the teacher, parent, community agency professional, or designated others. This requires an evaluation methodology that reflects the continuum and diversity of the school psychological services. A comprehensive plan should show the different kinds of children and the ways in which they are served as well as the number and types of contacts with educational and other professionals who work jointly with the school psychologist to plan services to children either in their educational programs or in the community.

Establishing Administrative and Supervisory Authority for the School Psychological Services Program

School psychologists are expected to pursue the service delivery goals as members of an independent, autonomous profession. In this regard, they must respect the legal and civil rights of their clients, be they students, teachers, other professionals, or parents, and adhere to the ethical guidelines of their professional organization. Moreover, they must be familiar with and conform to relevant statutes established by federal, state, and local governments. They are informed about state education requirements and other agency regulations that have the force of law and that relate to the delivery of school psychological services (e.g., certification of eligibility for and placement in special education programs).

Need for Policies and Procedures to Guide In-Service Education or Training

In systems that have established procedures and policies for in-service activities, psychological in-service offerings would follow established procedures. When established procedures do not exist, it will be necessary to formulate clearly the policies and guidelines for attendance, salary credits, and so on. In some situations, in-service participants may desire to receive continuing education credits that may be necessary for periodic certification or license renewal. School psychologists can be very helpful in assisting in the coordination of these organizational matters.

Selecting a School Psychologist When a Vacancy Occurs

Occasionally, school administrators need to replace a psychological services staff member or expand the school psychological services staff. This is an important opportunity as the quality of future school psychological services will be dependent, in part, on the quality of the education and training of the individual who is employed. It is not sufficient simply to ensure that potential school psychology employees have credentials for practice in a school or that they are eligible for state education credentials. Frequently, state education agency credential guidelines are less stringent than those specified by national standards such as the ones promulgated by the American Psychological Association.

In general, it is desirable that school psychologists have a minimum of three postbaccalaureate years of education and training as school psychologists. It is preferable that, at a minimum, they hold a 60-semester-hour advanced degree (master's or specialist) and have completed at least one year of supervised internship in a school setting or in a mental health setting. These programs require a minimum of two full years of graduate-level course work in psychology, measurement, research methodology, and educational applications of these areas, as well as extensive practica and internship experience. Standards are moving in the direction of doctoral preparation. There are national guidelines for the accreditation of graduate-level programs for school psychologists. Information about training institutions with accredited school psychology programs is available from the American Psychological Association (*American Psychologist*, December issue of each year).

In general, accreditation standards require at least 1,200 hours of supervised experience as an intern school psychologist. At least half of this internship time must be spent in a school setting. To be assured of the quality of the services to be provided by a candidate, you will need to know whether he or she has been educated in a *school psychology program*. If you are in doubt, it would be wise to ask your supervising school psychologist or your state education department consultant in school psychology which educational institutions offer graduate-level training in school psychology or to consult the American Psychological Association publication, *Graduate Study in Psychology* (published annually) for information about the program attended by the candidate. If the applicant has graduated from a professionally accredited school psychology program, then he or she will have a broad base of education in psychology that is relevant to children and to school programs.

In interviewing candidates, discuss their coursework, ways in which this knowledge is applicable to children's educational programs, and the specific types of supervised practica and internship experience that they have had. From this information, you will be able to appraise the general psychological expertise of the candidates, their experience with school-age children and youths, and the settings in which they have worked successfully.

After determining the academic and professional preparation of the candidates that you are considering, discuss with them the relevance of their preparation to your service delivery program. Since your program will provide

a comprehensive range of services to all the children in your district, prospective school psychologists need to possess more than the skills needed for individual assessment or direct-service counseling interventions. You will want to know what *training and experiences* they have had in the general psychological assessment of and interaction with school populations, in consultations with teachers, in conducting staff development programs, and in working out problems through community agencies. Information regarding evaluations of the effectiveness of their services in prior positions would be useful as well. These inquiries will inform you and other members of the personnel selection committee about the comprehensiveness of the individual's psychological preparation and will allow you to determine whether his or her background will suit the service delivery plan for your district. Checking the individuals' references as well as contacting their graduate advisor will be useful.

Concluding Comments About the Organization of Your School Psychological Services Delivery System

The delivery of a full range of services by the best prepared professionals requires care in preparing a comprehensive plan for services and in selecting your school psychological services staff. Also, the quality of service will be dependent on your follow-up administrative efforts to ensure that school psychologists have the resources necessary to meet the wide range of needs of the children in the district. Regular evaluation procedures will be needed to inform you and others in the school community about the range and efficacy of the services.

3

Enhancement of School and District Goals Through Use of School Psychological Services

The school psychologist provides leadership for effective human relationships in both the school and the community and provides services to prevent psychological barriers to learning and to health. As such, the psychologist is a key resource for you to mobilize for the enhancement of school goals. Involvement of the school psychologist in goal-oriented service delivery may take many forms depending on his or her expertise and knowledge as well as on the characteristics of the school population. Recipients of school psychological services may also include students, teachers, parents, community agencies, and members of the school staff.

The school's central goal is the education of children and youths to help them become productive and responsible adults committed to the maintenance and enhancement of our national democratic ideas of patriotism and to involvement in the democratic process, respect for other persons and their property, and the importance of work, savings, and personal integrity. The school psychologist provides a comprehensive perspective on individual differences that must be taken into account in the achievement of these objectives.

You and other effective educators recognize the common as well as the unique needs of every pupil. You share parents' beliefs that each child is special and has different ways of learning, different aptitudes and interests, and different needs. The schools are required to provide educational programs to advance the educational development of all students despite differences in their academic aptitudes, physical abilities, and handicapping conditions. On occasion, the aptitudes, interests, and specific learning characteristics of some children exceed the resources of the general education program and may require additional resources available through services in special education and assistance from community agencies and independent professional practitioners. The district organization and the emphasis that you, as a school administrator, place on special education versus general education will influence the proportion of psychological services that will be available within each program.

The importance of learning and of achieving school development goals and objectives cannot be overemphasized. Activities should be designed and implemented for the achievement of these goals and objectives in all areas. The school psychologist plays a valuable role in helping you in this process.

Knowledge of School Goals as an Essential Element in the Development of the Psychological Services System

As a school administrator, you must explicitly and clearly communicate the school's goals and objectives to the school psychologist and, together, you will determine how the school psychological services program can support these goals and objectives. In this reciprocal exchange, you will both agree on a plan for periodic review of the program vis-à-vis the goals and objectives of the school.

Schools need to ensure the academic, personal, and social development of students from diverse backgrounds. **Your school psychologist can contribute knowledge of the impact of individual differences, specific cultural factors, and family influences that must be taken into account to achieve these goals.** Schools should encourage pupils to feel good about themselves and others. The enhancement of self-esteem thus constitutes another important school goal. School psychologists can assist teachers in developing classroom programs that promote positive academic, personal, social, and physical self-concepts among students to ensure the highest self-esteem.

General Contributions of School Psychologists in Enhancing School Goals

There are additional ways in which the contribution of a school psychologist can make a difference in the school system's efforts to achieve system-wide goals. Some of these are discussed in the sections that follow.

Race relations and teacher morale. In the past 15 years or so, American society has become increasingly pluralistic in its social and ethnic make-up. Immigrants from regions such as southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Central America have been entering the United States in large numbers to escape political oppression and to seek greater economic opportunities. The children of these newly arrived immigrants are joining already sizable African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other minority groups in urban areas and account for 50% to 75% or more of the total student enrollment in some public school districts. These immigrants are adjusting themselves to the differences between the host country and their native country in terms of climate, language, and culture, but many of them suffer from economic hardship and live in poverty.

The increasingly diverse school population often results in conflicts among the cultural groups as well as in specific classroom difficulties for children of particular cultural backgrounds. Thus, educating children from diverse backgrounds requires a regard for cultural and ethnic differences combined with the application of educational innovations based on individual student needs. Psychologists' knowledge of various cultural patterns of child-rearing and of the various adaptive mechanisms that people of different cultures use in their

social worlds can assist teachers and other school personnel in educating a diverse student body.

Psychologists' skills in conflict resolution may be called on during crisis situations in which racial violence or racial tension has been reported. Improved race relations are vital to the creation of a warm, caring, and safe school environment in which all children can thrive.

Improving teacher morale and ensuring harmonious relations among school staff members, especially among those from different cultural backgrounds, is another area in which the school psychologist can make a contribution to the enhancement of school goals. Teachers and other school staff throughout large urban school districts may need to form their own support groups or to take other measures to manage stress. Psychologists can assist the teachers in facilitating group discussions, in helping to develop communication and problem-solving skills, and in promoting job satisfaction.

Staff development programs. Teachers often have concerns about social, cultural, emotional, physical, and other types of impediments to school learning and to acceptable behavior in the classroom. No matter how skillful and intense the teaching may be, how many dedicated teachers are employed, or how much new equipment is purchased, the quality of the school environment is dependent on the degree to which teachers can instruct students with diverse needs. Some teachers find it challenging to understand students who come from backgrounds different from their own, to teach students who are not academically motivated, or to accept students with special needs. Psychologists are especially resourceful in conducting staff development workshops, courses, and seminars to assist teachers in adapting their own teaching style to the range of individual differences among the students in their classroom. If offered to teachers of the early grades, to teachers of new students, and to teachers early in the school year, staff development may help prevent what may become major learning and behavior problems later on.

Consultation services to teachers and school staff members to enhance school goals. Many teachers have concerns about the educational development of one child or of a group of children in their classroom and seek consultation with a school psychologist to resolve the students' problems without the need of referral for psychological evaluation. Consultation refers to discussions among professional peers (the teacher and the psychologist) during which problems of a particular child or of a group of children are reviewed. By combining the teacher's expertise in teaching methods and instructional programs with the psychologist's knowledge of individual development and learning processes, the teacher and the psychologist can develop priorities for action in the classroom. The psychologist's role is that of a helping resource, not of a supervisor of teachers. The teacher's goal is to obtain an independent perspective on the child's problem that will be helpful in making modifications to the classroom program.

Crisis management programs that promote school goals. Every administrator has had to cope with the school-wide reaction to a natural disaster or to the death of a child or teacher. The reactions of the student body to such crises as suicide or a child with AIDS can powerfully affect the emotional tone throughout the school. The school psychologist is a key resource in developing a service delivery system to anticipate and respond to crises so as to effect a more positive response from students and to reduce or moderate the emotional impact of the crises on school performance.

Parent and Community Programs to Enhance School Goals

Parent conferences at school entry and throughout a students' school career. Encouraging all parents to provide information about a child's background during the first years of life is essential in planning an early education program. Later on and throughout a student's school career, parents, teachers, and school personnel should have frequent opportunities to review a student's progress and record of achievement over time. These activities promote the involvement of parents in support of school programs and encourage ongoing exchanges between parents and school personnel to foster student development. School psychologists can provide assistance in helping teachers to acquire skills in conducting such conferences and to develop methods of reporting student progress.

Community action programs. Psychologists can facilitate cooperative efforts between the school and the community to promote better relations and comprehensive services to children. Because psychologists are knowledgeable about the network of human services in their communities, they serve as a school district resource regarding available services such as legal aid societies, social services, health resources, mental health centers, private practitioners, and educational and recreational facilities. Joint programs developed between community agencies and schools to prevent antisocial behavior and violence have been effective in a number of communities.

Enhancing School Goals and Objectives Through the Provision of Services to Students, Groups, and Families

School psychologists' training in such areas as cognitive functioning, human development, interpersonal relations, psychopathology, and intervention techniques helps students to deal with life crises, developmental issues, interpersonal conflicts, and ineffective behavior patterns. One or more techniques (e.g., individual psychological evaluation, analysis of academic learning problems, counseling and therapy, behavioral approaches, and consultation) may be used, depending on the specific nature of the students' problems. With improved self-perception and interpersonal relationships, students can be ready to meet

the academic and social demands of a school setting. Such outcomes can lead to the achievement of the school's goal for access by all students.

In order for the school psychologist to provide a range of services to individuals, groups, and families, these activities need to be included in the annual plan of service. As a school administrator, you will need to support the psychologists in establishing the blocks of time necessary for implementation.

Services to individuals, groups, and families that facilitate the school's goals and objectives include the following examples.

Psychodiagnosis and psychoeducational assessment. One of the school psychologist's traditional major functions has been the psychological assessment or psychoeducational evaluation of individual students or of children and youths who have been referred by parents or by school personnel. The heavy load of assessment is the result of the high priority, based on the goals and objectives of the schools, given to the gathering of assessment and diagnostic information about students. The nature, content, extent, and intensity of the assessment are functions of the goals and objectives of the school relative to data gathering. Here, the school psychologist's task is to produce scientifically sound assessment data on which to base specific recommendations and decisions about a particular child. Then, this information is transmitted to the intended users through conferences and written reports.

Interventions with individuals and with groups to promote learning objectives. The school psychologist provides an individual student or group of students with direct interventions to promote better study and memory skills, control over attention, and analysis of the skills necessary for successful academic performance. Such interventions may be provided by intermediaries, such as teachers, student peers, paid aides, or volunteers. When intermediaries are used, the school psychologist serves as a consultant to them, that is, the school psychologist helps to plan the intermediary's activities with the student, monitors implementations, and evaluates outcomes. The specific intervention provided depends on the nature of the problem or problems presented by the individual or by a group. Generally, the intervention is intended to alleviate or remove psychological barriers to learning or to take into account specific handicapping conditions and to effect whatever other changes are required by the goals and objectives of the school.

Help for students with emotional or behavioral problems. Counseling or therapy for students with emotional or behavioral problems may be provided by the school psychologist. The goals for counseling, and whether referrals for services will be made to psychological practitioners and community personnel and agencies, will be determined by the school psychologist, subsequent to his or her consultation with school staff members, parents, and the student.

Reducing factors that produce drop-outs. Large city schools across the country report that their drop-out rates and the number of potential drop-outs have reached alarmingly high levels. Not only do many of the drop-outs fail

to become gainfully employed and to contribute economically to society, but the inability of the communities in which they reside to tap their talents and resources is also a tremendous loss to the nation as a whole. Among the precipitating factors that are cited for causing young people to drop out of school are teen pregnancy, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, low motivation, lack of self-discipline, academic deficiencies, and emotional disturbances. In this regard, school psychologists have a great deal to contribute both as therapists and as consultants. A multifaceted program that emphasizes *preventive* measures to improve social relationships, academic achievement, and motivation can be implemented with younger children — preschool through the fifth grade. Intense *intervention* efforts aimed at students who are at-risk for dropping out of school in grades six and above also could be included in the program.

Social skills training. Many students lack the skills needed to function in a social situation and to participate successfully in the educational process. Psychologists can institute programs to promote appropriate social skills among students. Such programs have been shown to improve attention in the classroom and to reduce interpersonal difficulties and aggressive acts among pupils both in general education and in special education settings.

Achievement motivation training. Many students do not achieve because they lack strategies for setting goals and using good study techniques. Psychologists can develop and implement programs to train pupils and teachers to use goal-setting techniques as a way of attaining higher achievement. Introduction of concepts of self-evaluation and goal setting have been shown to be effective in promoting learning and inspiring better motivation in schools.

Collaboration with community health and mental health personnel to promote student development. School districts collaborate with many outside individuals and community agencies involved in health care and human services for individuals and for groups of students. The school psychologist can be a key figure in successful collaboration with agency personnel to integrate the efforts of the agency with the student's school program. Many community hospitals are involved in caring for students who must return to school. Students may receive hospital treatment for a variety of conditions such as cancer, drug abuse, and severe emotional disturbance. In each case, there are human problems unique to the child's particular health problem that must be addressed to enable the child to make a successful transition back to school. The school psychologist is in an important position to facilitate this transition.

It may be necessary for the school psychologist to help outside agency personnel to understand a child's problems at school. Also, it may be necessary for the school psychologist to help school staff to understand the psychological and social nature of a child's health problems. Understanding and appreciation can be developed with school staff members on an individual basis or through workshops. Collaboration with agencies may take many other forms. The school psychologist may work with hospitals, community social service agencies, local correctional systems, private health service agencies, and private educational

agencies when children are in the process of making a transition from an agency to a school.

Other services provided by school psychologists. School psychologists, through their own continuing education, add new skills to their professional credentials. As a result, they continually expand the range and types of services that they can offer to their clients.

Research and Program Evaluation Support for School Goals and Objectives

The preparation of school psychologists requires mastery of research design and of statistical treatment of research data. Advanced training in these areas is common among doctoral-level school psychologists and includes specific courses in program evaluation and needs assessment at both the school and district levels. As the school administrator, you may wish to use the skills of your school psychologist to conduct needs assessments of a changing school population, to perform federally mandated evaluations, and to evaluate the achievement of your school or system's goals and objectives.

Evaluation of program effectiveness. School psychologists know basic experimental and quasi-experimental design procedures used in evaluating the effectiveness of school programs. Whenever a new program is considered, the school psychologist can design evaluation research to assess the relative effectiveness of the program. However, you will need a priori planning if designs are to be in place that can yield appropriate data for evaluation and decision making.

Comparative evaluation of competing models of program intervention for potential drop-outs, comparative evaluation of the use of text books in instruction, studies of curricular approaches, and analyses of specific instructional methods in special education are some examples of program effectiveness research that school districts may need to conduct. When completed by school district staff, the research can be designed to reflect school district goals economically and effectively.

Federally mandated program evaluation. Certain federally funded programs, such as educational services to disadvantaged children and reimbursable special education programs, require ongoing evaluation. They are properly constructed around goal-attainment models of evaluation. Usually, educational goals have been specified and an effort needs to be made to examine the extent to which program objectives have been achieved. School psychologists are knowledgeable about appropriate designs and specific measurement models that might be required in this mandated evaluation. As a result of these evaluation efforts, the program objectives may be revised, a task that professional school psychologists in collaboration with school administrators are well equipped to perform.

Needs assessment. The school psychologist is seen by many as being in a unique position to assist schools in the organizational development process through needs assessment. Needs assessment is crucial to the growth and change process of organizations. It pinpoints the needs of students and classrooms and of the system that must be taken into account in planning school programs. People are motivated to change when differences between desired and present status are brought into focus.

Psychologists in school systems, by virtue of their knowledge of the social psychology of organizations and of the measurement of organizational factors, seem to be in a strong position to facilitate a process of ongoing needs assessment. Their ability to collate and summarize the needs assessment data for subsequent program planning provides an essential resource in this effort.

General program evaluation. Although the planning of the evaluation of a program should precede the implementation of the program, evaluation is best perceived as an ongoing process. School psychologists can be of assistance throughout the process and of particular use in the early stages when one must (a) devise appropriate conceptual schema by which evaluation areas may be classified; (b) define the strategies for data collection, the choices of data to be collected, and the methods for analysis or summary of data as may be appropriate to each conceptual area; (c) design systems or models for the interpretation and dissemination of the results of the evaluation procedures; and (d) provide commentary on the applicability and limitations of the results to the problems or systems under study.

* * *

This is just a sampling of how the school psychological services program and school psychologists can be used profitably by you, the school administrator, in the necessary evaluation tasks of the schools. Program planning and evaluation activities for the school should be a priority item on the agenda for your regular conferences with the person who heads the school psychological services program in your district.

4

Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues in the Delivery of Psychological Services in Schools

When psychologists provide psychological assessments, interventions, staff development, or program evaluation studies, they are cognizant of their responsibility in protecting the welfare of others. Certain federal and state statutes, as well as legal precedents from litigation, set limits on psychological practice, especially for school psychologists because the legal system often views employees of public schools as agents of the state. In psychology, as in other professions, codes of ethics and standards of practice are promulgated by professional associations (e.g., the American Psychological Association) to guide practitioners and protect the public.

Litigation and Legislation Affecting Psychologists in Schools

Ordinarily, courts defer to the expertise of administrators of public institutions such as schools. The courts have involved themselves in school policy principally in cases in which individuals have claimed that their constitutional rights to equal protection and due process were not being respected. Equal protection refers to that aspect of the Fourteenth Amendment that forbids the state (including public schools) from treating some persons differently without sufficient justification. For example, the public schools cannot treat protected classes of students differently, such as by placing girls in home economics classes rather than in advanced science classes or by limiting minority students to certain schools. The due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prevents the government (including school officials and school psychologists) from denying to persons life, liberty, and property without an appropriate procedure. The courts have interpreted *property* broadly to include such school-related issues as the right to a free appropriate education, and *liberty* as the freedom from stigmatizing labels (e.g., a special education label) as well as the right to privacy (e.g., protection from disclosure of records without just cause).

Psychologists who work in schools often are involved in situations in which constitutional issues may arise. Assessment for special education placement, disciplinary hearings, and confidentiality of counseling or therapy sessions with students and parents, all raise potential claims of equal protection or due process violations.

Litigation Related to Psychological Services in Schools

Much of the legislation affecting psychological services (as well as special education) in schools has resulted from legal challenges raised at the state and local levels through litigation by parents on behalf of their handicapped children. Although the results of litigation typically are limited to the specific individuals involved, such case law does establish legal precedent for other cases brought by other plaintiffs and can result in state or federal laws being passed if the issues raised are considered widespread. For example, Public Law 94-142 (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq*), as amended by P.L. 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, granted handicapped students equal access to educational services. It was introduced following a series of court cases similar to *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, in which a group of parents sued to gain educational services for their mentally retarded children in the public schools (Overcast, Sales, & Sacker, 1990).

In the psychological assessment area, a landmark case has limited the use of intelligence tests to place African-American students in special education classes in California school districts (*Larry P. v. Riles*). Ironically, a similar federal case in Illinois, *PASE v. Hannon*, based on essentially the same arguments and evidence, resulted in an affirmation of the appropriate use of intelligence tests with minority students (Bersoff & Hofer, 1990; DeMers & Bersoff, 1985). The majority of court cases related to psychological services in schools are concerned with the issues of nondiscriminatory assessment and of using qualified examiners and appropriately validated tests (Bersoff & Hofer, 1990), all questions that may pertain to the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Federal Legislation

Although litigation has had an important influence on school practice, federal and state legislation have a more widespread and uniform impact on legal issues affecting psychological services.

Four major pieces of federal legislation have had great impact on services to children and youths and on school psychological functions in your school: (a) P.L. 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act; (b) P.L. 99-457, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 (extending the provisions of P.L. 94-142 to the preschool population); (c) P.L. 101-476, the Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1990 (these three pieces of legislation are codified in 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400–1485); and (d) P.L. 93-380, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g).

P.L. 94-142, the Education of all Handicapped Children's Act, dramatically affected the way in which all school personnel provide special education services. The section of P.L. 94-142 related to nondiscriminatory assessment, qualified examiners, test validation, and informed consent are most relevant

to services provided by school psychologists. These sections and the regulations implementing them require that

- tests be administered in the child's native language;
- tests be administered by trained personnel;
- tests be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used;
- no single test or procedure be the sole determinant of an appropriate placement for a child;
- the assessment be comprehensive, multifaceted, and conducted by a multidisciplinary team;
- children with specific sensory or communication disorders be given tests that assess their genuine abilities separately from their handicaps;
- parents be notified in writing and in the language typically used in their home whenever the school seeks to initiate an evaluation or change a child's placement; and
- parents be notified in writing in their own language when the school refuses the parents' request to initiate or change a child's evaluation or placement.

The law also requires that informed parental consent be obtained before an evaluation is conducted or placement in special education is made.

P.L. 99-457 mandates special education services to all children who need such services aged 3 years and above, with special incentives to serve children aged birth to 2 years. The primary components of this law and its implementing regulations include

- a state-determined definition of developmental delay;
- timeliness for ensuring services to all children by age 5 years;
- a multidisciplinary assessment;
- development of an Individualized Family Services Plan;
- appointment of a case manager;
- establishment of a state interagency coordinating council to facilitate interagency management of services;
- determination of personnel training and certification standards; and
- development of a comprehensive, statewide, Child Find system to guarantee identification of all eligible children.

Several aspects of P.L. 99-457 create the potential for legal disputes for school districts and psychologists. For example, what are the legal implications for those parents who do not wish to participate in the family services component of the Individual Family Services Plan? Whose rights are paramount, the parents' or the child's? Who will make that determination? Who decides what constitutes relevant information if a parent considers the family assessment process intrusive and an invasion of privacy?

Under P.L. 94-142, parents have the right to an impartial hearing, followed by court action if the hearing fails to resolve a dispute. Is this a practical solution to resolving disputes over appropriate services to preschool children

when delay in services may preclude the necessary early intervention? Such questions are not addressed in the current legislation, leaving school administrators, including psychologists, to develop policies and procedures to protect the rights of children, parents, and the district.

P.L. 93-380, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), affects school psychologists and other staff. Because psychologists who work in schools often generate reports that become part of a student's record, the disclosure and protection provisions of FERPA will affect the psychological practices in your school. FERPA was intended to regulate the treatment of education records by all educational institutions receiving federal funds. Specifically, it allows custodial parents of minor students access to their child's official school records, provides parents with the opportunity to challenge inaccurate or misleading information, and requires written parental consent before records are released to a third party.

A parent's right to access their child's school record as outlined in FERPA, as well as in related provisions of P.L. 94-142, creates a legal basis for parents to obtain access to their child's complete record. A second major aspect of FERPA is the provision that allows parents to amend education records. At a hearing to amend the information that they consider inaccurate, misleading, or an undue invasion of privacy, parents are entitled to legal representation at their own expense. If consensus is not reached, then parents have the right to add a comment to existing information, and this comment must be included when the child's file is released to anyone.

This act, as well as P.L. 94-142, P.L. 99-457, and P.L. 101-476, presents potential challenges for school administrators and school psychologists as they interpret the rights of children and families in the context of the privileged nature of the work of psychologists.

What records shall be developed and maintained regarding family strengths and weaknesses and who shall have access to such records? Whose needs will be of primary importance: the family's right to privacy, the child's need for intervention, or the district's duty to serve? What procedures are in place to permit parents to correct a record if they deem necessary? Can records be maintained in such a way that they will not be deemed "educational records" versus other kinds of records (e.g., medical, social, etc.)? You, as the school administrator, along with your school psychologists and other service providers, will need to establish policies in advance of disputes to show that the actions taken were carefully considered in light of conflicting legal mandates.

State Legislation

Most state legislatures have passed statutes that either directly or indirectly affect psychological practice in the school. For example:

- Mandatory reporting laws have been passed in numerous states to require mental health professionals, teachers, and others to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

- Several states have enacted so-called "duty to warn" laws requiring psychologists to warn potential victims whose well-being has been threatened by an individual receiving services from a psychologist.
- Some states have laws requiring school personnel (including school psychologists) to report any evidence of drug abuse to school officials.

Mandatory reporting laws vary from state to state in their specific requirements and often operate in potential conflict with other state statutes granting psychologists the right to privileged communication. Psychologists who work in the public schools with school-aged children should be expected to be familiar with such state (and sometimes local) laws that place specific limits on the usual legal and ethical protections that safeguard the psychologist–client relationship.

Ethical and Professional Standards of Practice for School Psychologists

Psychology, as a profession, has established an ethical code and standards of behavior that serve to guide and regulate the practice of psychologists. Ethical principles often complement legal mandates, but they may also differ from or go beyond the requirements of law.

Ethical principles. Important provisions bearing on the functions of school psychologists are found in the APA's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (1992). Please refer to that publication for specific ethical principles relevant to psychological practice in the schools.

Professional guidelines for practice in schools. The *Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by School Psychologists* (APA, 1981) and the *General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services* (APA, 1987) define the training and credentialing of a professional psychologist, provide the characteristics of an appropriate school psychological services unit, and describe the procedures necessary to ensure accountability.

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (APA, 1985) describe the technical characteristics of reliable and valid assessment procedures as well as the appropriate use of assessment information. These standards guide the professional behavior of psychologists and protect the public from inadequate tests and from inappropriate assessment of children in the public schools. They also guide the use of various types of tests to evaluate educational outcomes. These testing standards are particularly relevant to your school psychologist and to the testing services that he or she provides.

The *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* (APA Joint Committee on Testing Practices, 1988) describes the respective responsibilities of test developers and of test users with regard to developing or selecting appropriate tests, interpreting scores, striving for fairness in testing, and adequately informing test takers about their rights and about testing procedures. This code

may help school districts and school psychologists in designing school-wide assessment systems to satisfy ethical and legal obligations to parents and students and to avoid legal disputes over claims of unfair assessment practices.

* * *

Considering the possible legal and ethical dilemmas that may arise in your school district, you and your school psychologist should develop formal policies and procedures to address these legal and ethical mandates and standards of conduct. By doing so, you will promote appropriate professional practice and will protect the welfare of the students in your school district.

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Appendix A
Sample Interview Form

School Psychologist Sample Interview Form

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
Current Position _____

Educational Background

Institution	Dates Attended	Degree Granted

Major advisor: _____
Types of research conducted: _____
_____

Internship

Location	Dates

Responsibilities: _____
_____
Supervisors: _____

Previous Experience

Practica	Sites	Dates

Responsibilities: _____
_____
Supervisors: _____

Other Psychological Work Experience

Title	Sites	Dates

Responsibilities: _____
_____
Supervisors: _____

Teaching Experience

Title _____ Sites _____ Dates _____

_____ _____ _____

Responsibilities: _____

_____

_____

Supervisors: _____

Other Non-Psychological Work Experience

Title _____ Sites _____ Dates _____

_____ _____ _____

Responsibilities: _____

_____

Supervisors: _____

Populations with which you have had experience (e.g., preschool, physically handicapped, bilingual, African-American, Hispanic): _____

_____

Activities with which you have had experience (Check all that apply):

_____ behavioral counseling
_____ community collaboration
_____ conducting statistical tests on computers
_____ consultation
_____ counseling therapy
_____ group assessment
_____ individual assessment
_____ maintaining pupil databases
_____ parent education
_____ prevention activities
_____ program development
_____ projects (list) _____
_____ research skills
_____ staff development
_____ teacher consultation
_____ other techniques used (list) _____

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Additional Readings

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Psychology in the Schools Program Mission Statement

The Psychology in the Schools Program in the Practice Directorate of the American Psychological Association is the focal point within the association where issues pertaining to the practice of psychology in school settings are addressed. Furthermore, since the majority of psychological practice in schools is conducted by school psychologists, this group represents a key constituency for the program. In addition, the issues faced by school psychologists who practice in hospitals, mental health centers, agencies, universities, or other settings, including private practice, are areas of concentration. The program engages in political and professional advocacy and policy development in response to both guild and professional practice issues that face practicing psychologists who seek to provide quality services to children, youth, families, school and agency staff, and systems.

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